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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 22 December 2016

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/71/L.43 and Add.1)*]

71/249. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling its resolution 70/19 of 3 December 2015 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace and its other related resolutions,

Recalling also that, in its resolution 67/104 of 17 December 2012, it proclaimed the period 2013–2022 the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures and invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in this context to be the lead agency in the United Nations system,

Encouraging, in this regard, activities aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue in order to enhance peace and social stability, respect for diversity and mutual respect and to create, at the global level, and also at the regional, national and local levels, an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding,

Recalling its resolution 69/312 of 6 July 2015 on the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, in which it reaffirmed its support for the Alliance and reiterated the valuable role of the Alliance in promoting greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs,

Recalling also its resolutions 70/109 of 10 December 2015 on a world against violence and violent extremism and 70/291 of 1 July 2016 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review,

Recalling further its resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, by which it declared 2001 the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and expressed its firm determination to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations,

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

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Recalling its resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981, by which it proclaimed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,

Bearing in mind the valuable contribution that interreligious and intercultural dialogue can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

Noting that interreligious and intercultural dialogue has made significant contributions to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect, as well as to the promotion of a culture of peace and an improvement of overall relations among people from different cultural and religious backgrounds and among nations,

Recognizing that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are sources of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind,

Convinced that the promotion of cultural pluralism and tolerance towards and dialogue among various cultures and civilizations would contribute to the efforts of all peoples and nations to enrich their cultures and traditions by engaging in a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and intellectual, moral and material achievements,

Noting the Unite for Heritage campaign launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in March 2015, which aims to celebrate and safeguard cultural heritage and diversity around the world,

Recalling that States have the primary responsibility to promote and protect human rights, including the human rights of persons belonging to religious minorities, including their right to exercise their religion or belief freely,

Bearing in mind that tolerance of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversities contributes towards peace, mutual understanding and friendship among people of different cultures and nations and that these diversities should be made part of intercultural and interreligious dialogue efforts, as appropriate,

Welcoming the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[2] and acknowledging that the Agenda includes the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development,

Noting the various initiatives at the local, national, regional and international levels for enhancing interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation, which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated,

Acknowledging that relevant components of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (the Belt and Road) Initiative strengthen people-to-people bonds and promote mutual understanding and cooperation,

Noting the fifth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, held in Astana in June 2015,

Welcoming the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, in promoting intercultural dialogue,

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[2] Resolution 70/1.

Welcoming also the declaration of the High-level Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue adopted by the Asia-Europe Meeting, with the theme "Harmony between civilizations as a prerequisite for sustainable development", held in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, on 3 and 4 July 2014,

Welcoming further the work of the Anna Lindh Foundation and the ongoing work of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna,

Taking note of the declaration of the Forum on the Role of Religious Leaders in Preventing Incitement that could Lead to Atrocity Crimes, held in Fez, Morocco, on 23 and 24 April 2015, and the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance, Discrimination and Incitement to Hatred and/or Violence on the basis of Religion or Belief,

Noting the international symposium launching the African initiative on education for peace and development through interreligious and intercultural dialogue, held in Cotonou, Benin, in May 2015,

Welcoming the second World Nomad Games, held in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, from 3 to 10 September 2016, and recognizing the importance that it places on intercultural dialogue and its valuable contribution to promoting social cohesion, peace and development,

Acknowledging the positive contribution of individuals and of relevant civil society organizations to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and the culture of peace,

Underlining the importance of education, including education on culture, peace, tolerance, mutual understanding and human rights, in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue, respect for diversity and the elimination of discrimination based on religion or belief,

Recognizing the contributions of the media and of new information and communications technology to promoting peoples' understanding of different cultures and religions, including through the promotion of dialogue,

Reaffirming the importance of sustaining the process of engaging all stakeholders, including young men and women as relevant actors, in interreligious and intercultural dialogue within the appropriate initiatives at various levels, which aims to challenge prejudices, improve mutual understanding and foster cooperation,

Recognizing the commitment of all religions to peace and the contribution that interreligious and intercultural dialogue among religious groups and individuals, in particular religious leaders, can make towards an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all mankind,

Noting the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization conference on the theme "Youth and the Internet: fighting radicalization and extremism", held in Paris in June 2015,

Noting also the Appeal for Peace, signed by religious leaders during the World Day of Prayer for Peace, held in Assisi, Italy, on 20 September 2016,

1. *Reaffirms* that mutual understanding and interreligious and intercultural dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace;[3]

3. *Recognizes* the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and its valuable contribution to promoting social cohesion, peace and development, and calls upon Member States to consider, as appropriate and where applicable, interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and social stability and the full realization of internationally agreed development goals;

4. *Also recognizes* the efforts by relevant stakeholders to foster peaceful and harmonious coexistence within societies by promoting respect for religious and cultural diversity, including by engendering sustained and robust interaction among various segments of society;

5. *Further recognizes* the leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on intercultural dialogue and its contribution to interreligious dialogue, as well as its activities related to the culture of peace and non-violence and its focus on concrete actions at the global, regional and subregional levels;

6. *Encourages* Member States and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to further consider and carry out activities in support of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022), adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,[4] which provides a framework for enhancing interreligious and intercultural dialogue and promoting tolerance and mutual understanding, while placing emphasis on the involvement of women and youth in such dialogue;

7. *Condemns* any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, whether it involves the use of print, audiovisual or electronic media or any other means;

8. *Reaffirms* the solemn commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for and observance and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] and other instruments relating to human rights and international law, the universal nature of these rights and freedoms being beyond question;

9. *Welcomes* the Baku Declaration, adopted at the Seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, with the theme "Living together in inclusive societies: a challenge and a goal", held in Baku from 25 to 27 April 2016, and encourages relevant stakeholders to continue their efforts to promote mutual understanding among different civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs;

10. *Underlines* the importance of moderation as a value within societies for countering extremism in all its aspects and for further contributing to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation, and encourages efforts, as appropriate, to enable voices of moderation to work together in order to build a more secure, inclusive and peaceful world;

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[3] A/71/407.

[4] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Executive Board decision 194 EX/10.

11. *Welcomes* the efforts by the media to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, encourages the further promotion of dialogue among the media from all cultures and civilizations, emphasizes that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, and reaffirms that the exercise of this right carries with it special duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but that these can be only such as are provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals;

12. *Also welcomes* the efforts to use information and communications technology, including the Internet, to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, including through the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal established following the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development, held in Manila in 2010, as well as the Peace and Dialogue e-Portal of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and encourages relevant stakeholders to utilize the opportunity to disseminate their best practices and experiences on interreligious and intercultural dialogue by contributing to the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal and to the Peace and Dialogue e-Portal;

13. *Encourages* Member States to consider, as and where appropriate, initiatives that identify areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation, inter alia, the ideas suggested during the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, held in New York in October 2007, including the idea of an enhanced process of dialogue among world religions, as well as the ideas suggested during the third High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, held in Paris in November 2012;

14. *Acknowledges* the active engagement of the United Nations system with faith-based and cultural organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations in the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and in bringing together people of different cultures, religions, faiths or beliefs to discuss common issues and objectives;

15. *Also acknowledges* the important role of civil society, including academia and volunteer groups, in fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and encourages support for practical measures that mobilize civil society, including building capacities, opportunities and frameworks for cooperation;

16. *Invites* Member States to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure durable peace and sustained development, including by working with faith leaders and communities and through reconciliatory measures and acts of service and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals;

17. *Recognizes* that the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat plays a valuable role as focal point within the Secretariat on the issue, and encourages it to continue to interact and coordinate with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and coordinate their contribution to the intergovernmental process aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

67th plenary meeting
22 December 2016